

## [Mrs. Mary Ellen McMillan]

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Carrizozo, N. Mex.

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Mrs. Mary Ellen McMillan.

### OCT 10 1938 2nd PIONEER STORY

I was born in Adamsville, Texas, January 15, 1880. My father, Frank tho'mpson, was born in Alabama, February 28, 1862. When he was quite young his parents moved to Texas. My mother was Elizabeth Richardson and was born in Hamilton, Texas, June 5, 1867. My father and mother were married at Adamsville Texas, in 1872.

My father owned a large farm and raised fine blooded horses and registered Jersey cattle.

My mother and father had ten children, John, Fannie, Whit, Lonnie, Mary Ellen (myself), Guy, Hattie, tho'mas, Elizabeth, and Belle.

When my father was about nineteen years old he helped drive a herd of cattle from Adamsville Texas, to some place in Colorado. (I do not remember the name of the place.) He came back to Texas by way of Lincoln County New Mexico and was so much impressed with the country that he always wanted to come back to Lincoln County to live.

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His mother never would consent for him to move his family to New Mexico, as she tho'ught it was such a wild country, but in May 1902 he decided to sell his place in Texas and come out to New Mexico.

My father and a friend of his, named Bill Lane, and Tom and Jack Dooley, who were my father's nephews, came out to New Mexico to find a place to locate. They stopped at Nogal, New Mexico. [????]

About two months after my father left to come to New 2 Mexico I was married to [Walter?] H. McMillan, on July 10, 1902. My husband and I wanted to come out to New Mexico too, but we stayed on with my mother until the crops were all gathered.

My mother and my sisters and I put up around two hundred gallons of fruit and vegetables that fall. We were very busy getting ready to join my father in New Mexico.

On October 24th, 1902, my mother, two brothers, two sisters, my husband and I started from Adamsville Texas, for Nogal New Mexico. We had three covered wagons, each wagon drawn by two horses. My mother and my youngest sister rode in one wagon, my brother Guy drove one, and my husband and I had our own wagon. My mother decided to bring out some of our fine horses and had about twenty head. My brother, tho'mas, and my sister Belle, rode horseback and drove the horses.

The three wagons stayed together for about six days until we got to [Crews?] Texas, where my husband's father lived. We decided to stay there for awhile (my husband and I) but my mother decided that they would go on and so she, with my brothers and sisters took the two wagons and the twenty head of horses and went right on thro'ugh to Nogal. They got there about the middle of November, 1902, and joined my father at Nogal. My mother and father stayed at Nogal about a year and went to [Ancho?], New Mexico, and filed on a homestead there and lived on this same place until their death, many years later.

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My husband and I stayed with his father in Crews Texas, until January 1903. It had gotten so cold that we decided that we would wait until spring to go on to New Mexico. We left Crews Texas and went up to Guion, Texas, about twenty miles south 3 of Abilene Texas, where we stayed until March 27, 1903, when we started out for New Mexico in our covered wagon. We had two horses, a gentle one and one that was not well broken. When my husband would get the team hitched up the unbroken horse would immediately start to run. I would always get in the wagon and hold the lines and my husband would have to run and catch the wagon as it moved off.

We had our chuck box on the back of the wagon and carried two water kegs tied on the side. We had a pair of springs in the wagon with our bed on it and we slept in the wagon. We used a lantern for light. We had a coop tied under the wagon with six hens and a rooster, [?] blood white leghorns, that kept us in eggs all the way out to New Mexico. We used wood for fuel until we got on the plains and then we used cow chips.

We struck the plains at Gail Texas and the very first day on the plains we ran into the worst sand storm that I ever experienced in my life. The sand filled up the ruts in the road and made it very hard to travel. We were facing the wind and late in the afternoon we came to a large water tank. It was a dirt tank and full of water and while we were still about a quarter of a mile away from it we tho'ught it was raining for we could feel the water, but it was just the wind blowing the water against the dam with such force that it threw the water up in the air. We stopped at the tank for the night and the wind was so very strong that we were afraid that the wagon would be blown over. We could not cook any dinner or supper that day but we had all our provisions with us. We had to open some canned fruit but it got so full of sand that we could hardly eat it at all.

We traveled the old Chisum Trail and there was not a 4 store or a post-office from Gail Texas, to Roswell New Mexico.

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We saw a lot of antelope, coyotes and prairie chickens. One day my husband decided that he would shoot some prairie hens as we had only bacon for meat. I stayed in the wagon and my husband got out to shoot them. He had a shot gun and when he fired at the prairie hens the team of horses got frightened and ran away with me. They ran for about a half mile before they stopped. We were so excited that we forgot to get the prairie hens, tho'ugh we knew that he had gotten two of them, and we did not get any fresh meat after all.

After we left Gail Texas, we came to the Fish Ranch. This ranch was about twenty-five miles northwest of Gail. The cattle were dying by hundreds. It was very dry and grass was poor. When my husband went up to a wind-mill to see if he could water the team and get water for our water kegs, he found one of our old friends from Adamsville Texas, a man by the name of Virgil Piper. We were so glad to see him and he ate dinner with us that day. He worked on the Fish ranch.

From the Fish ranch the road followed up what was known as Sulphur Draw. The next place we came to was the L. F. D. ranch. The head quarters ranch house was at Mescalero Springs, near what is now known as Cap Rock, Texas. Not far from Mescalero Springs we came to some alkali sands which were twelve miles across. My father had already written us about these sands and did not think that we could make it across them with just the one team of horses and had told us that he would send one of my brothers to meet us at Mescalero Springs, with another team of horses, but when we got there my brother had not come so we decided to try to cross any way. The sand had piled up into ridges and was so fine that the wagon wheels sank almost to the hubs. It was very hard for the horses to pull and every time that they would get to the top of a ridge the horses would have to stop and blow. It took us one whole day to cross tho'se sands and just after we got on the other side we met my brother coming with the extra team. He was very much surprised that we had made it across as well as we had.

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Not very far from the Mescalero Springs we came to a small ranch where there was a big prairie fire. The man on the ranch (I have forgotten his name) asked my husband if her would take one of our team of horses and go round up a saddle horse for him as all of his horses were out in a big pasture and he could not get them on foot. The man had a number of baby calves out on the flats and he was afraid that the fire would trap these baby calves. My husband was glad to help him out by getting his horses for him and the man and his wife gave us some fresh milk and butter and eggs.

Not very much happened from this ranch on in to Nogal. I saw my first burros between [Roswell?] and Nogal. They had water kegs strapped on their backs. I tho'ught it looked very queer.

We reached Nogal New Mexico on April 15, 1903. We stayed there for a short while with my parents and then we moved to [Ancho?], New Mexico, where my husband had work at the [cement?] plant there. There was only one house in [Ancho?] at that time. We lived in a tent. My first child, Ruth, was born on July 31, 1903. She was the first American child born in the town of Ancho.

While we were living at Ancho New Mexico, my father filed 6 on a homestead near Ancho and moved there.

In October, 1903, my husband decided to work for the rail road company and we moved to Carrizozo, New Mexico. My husband worked as pumper for the El Paso, Northwestern Railroad Company, and stayed with this company for about ten years. When we moved to Carrizozo there was one store, a saloon and post-office, all in one long building under one roof. There were very few people in Carrizozo then and even as late as 1905 there were not enough children here to have a school. I had to go to White Oaks, New Mexico, for my dry goods. That was a real nice town at that time.

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After leaving the rail road company my husband went to work for the New Mexico Light and Power Company and he stayed with this company for ten or twelve years.

In 1929 my husband filed on a homestead eight miles south of Ancho, New Mexico. We lived there until 1937 when we traded our homestead to our son-in-law, Walter Burnett, for a house and two lots in Carrizozo, New Mexico, where we still live.

My mother and father lived on their homestead at Ancho until their death. My mother died in 1922 and my father in 1933. About five years before my father died he lost his eye sight. He lived with me while we lived on our homestead near Ancho. I have a sister Belle, Mrs. J. T. Johnson, who with her husband and two children live on their homestead about three miles from Ancho, New Mexico. Of all my father's family there are only four living. My brother Whit thompson lives near Adamsville Texas. My sister Fannie, is Mrs. Carter, and lives at Hot Springs, New Mexico, and my sister, Mrs. Johnson, is at Ancho, New Mexico, and I am at Carrizozo.

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Both of my parents are buried at Ancho, New Mexico.

My husband and I have six children, Ruth, Bonnie, Euda, Walter, Mary Ellen and Corrine, all were born in New Mexico and all live in New Mexico now.

For the past four years my husband has driven a school bus from Ancho, New Mexico, to Carrizozo, New Mexico.

NARRATOR: Mrs. Mary Ellen McMillan, Aged 58 years. Carrizozo, N. M.

Edith L. Crawford

Carrizozo, N. Mex.

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### Pioneer Story

Mrs. Mary Ellen (tho'mpson) McMillan PIONEER STORY

Corrections on Pioneer Story of Mrs. Mary Ellen (tho'mpson) McMillan. Page 1, paragraph 3. My mother and father had ten children, John, Fannie, Whit, Lonnie, Mary Ellen (my self,) Guy, Hattie, tho'mas, Elizabeth and Belle, all born in Adamsville Texas. Page 2, paragraph 3. The five children that came to New Mexico, with my mother were my two brother Whit and Guy two sisters Fannie and Belle and my self.

The rest of the children three boys and two girls were married and had homes of their own in Texas.